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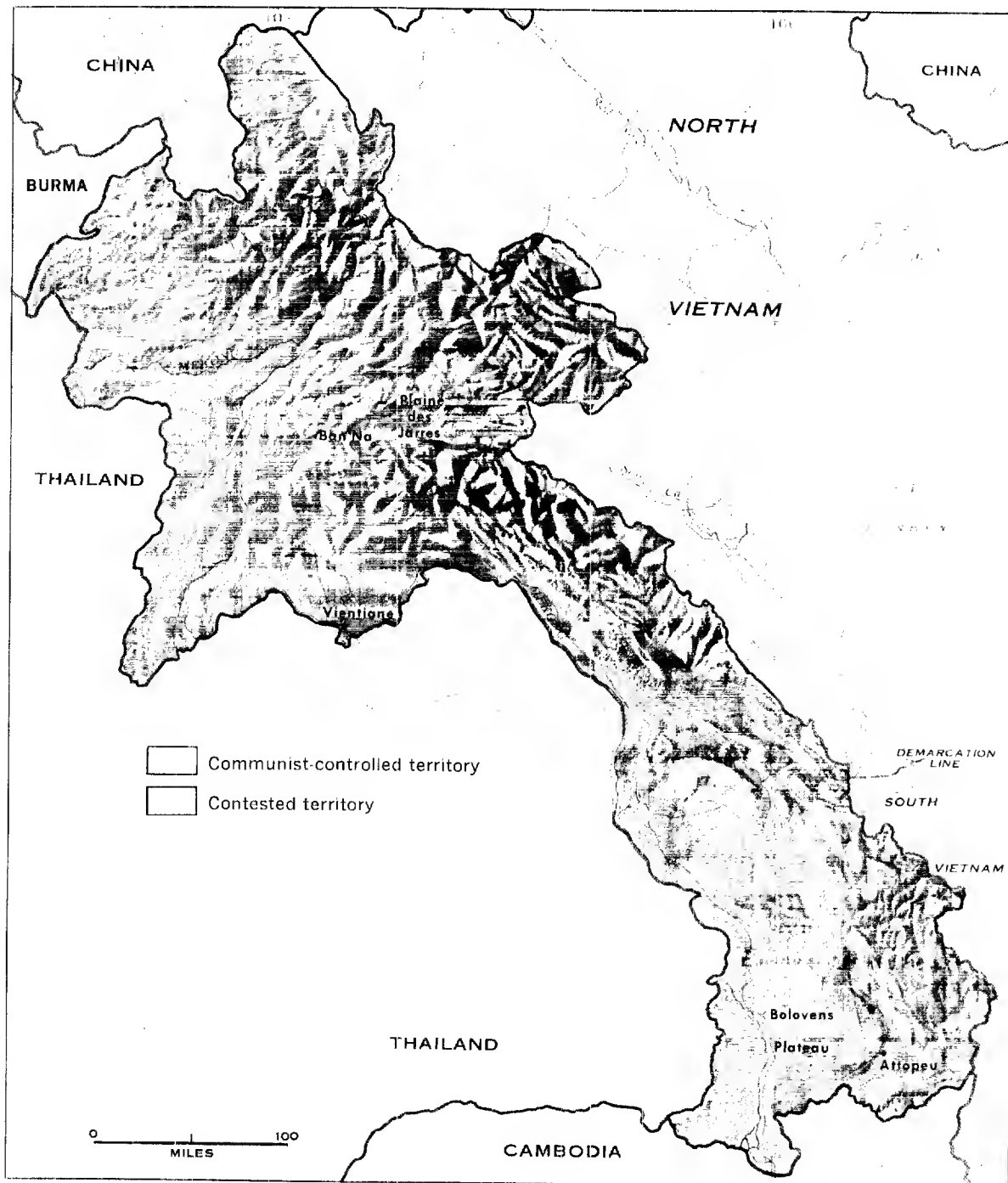
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LAOS: Communist forces have overrun the principal government bases on the southeastern rim of the Bolovens Plateau.

The prolonged lull in significant military activity on the Bolovens ended abruptly on 22 November as widespread attacks were made on Laotian guerrilla positions by an estimated three North Vietnamese battalions. The Communists succeeded in taking the two key government bases on the plateau ten miles northwest of Attapeu as well as four other outposts in the same general area. In addition, enemy forces seized a guerrilla base camp just east of the plateau about 30 miles north of Attapeu.

It is too early to tell whether the North Vietnamese intend to hold these positions. Government air strikes were directed against enemy units throughout the day on 22 November, and irregular forces are regrouping for counterattacks. If the Communists succeed in consolidating their gains, the government's capacity to harass enemy supply and troop movements through this region could be substantially affected.

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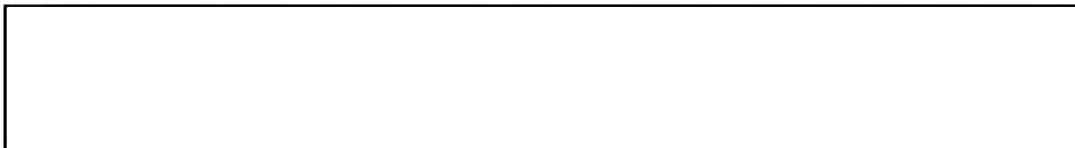
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SYRIA: Hafiz Asad has made further moves toward consolidating his power position.

In the provisional government named on 20 November, Asad appointed himself prime minister and retained the Defense Ministry, which he had held under the previous regime, while dropping members of the civilian wing of the Baath Party that he ousted on 13 November. The new 26-man cabinet also contains six members who favor union with Egypt. The inclusion of two Communists is probably meant to reassure the USSR that no sudden change in policy is in store.

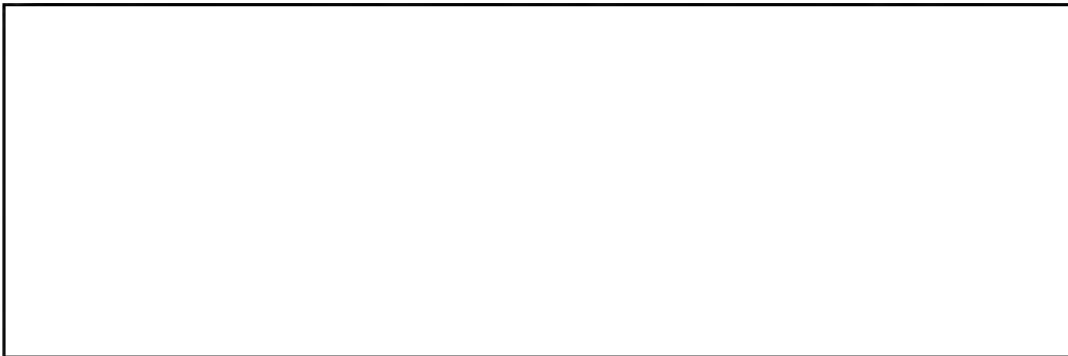
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LIBYA: A referendum may be held to determine popular support for Qaddafi's plan for a union with Egypt and Sudan.



Anti-Egyptian feeling is endemic in Libya, and disillusionment with the RCC, which surfaced after the initial popularity of the revolution in September 1969, has not been dispelled by Qaddafi's penchant for close ties with Egypt. Many Libyans believe that domestic problems should take top priority in the RCC, a view thought to be shared by several of its members.

Considering the trouble it could cause for Qaddafi, the RCC, and the Egyptians themselves--who seem determined not to repeat their unhappy experiment at union with Syria--the actual holding of a referendum on the unity proposal remains open to question. Even so, the RCC has been able to hang together despite internal differences in the first year since the coup. The Libyan Army, stiffened by Egyptian troops and security personnel in Libya, has stood firmly behind the RCC.



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CHILE: Friction is increasing between the Allende government and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) of former president Frei.

It is becoming clear that the PDC's support for Allende in the congressional runoff does not guarantee that the new government will not attack PDC interests. Christian Democratic bureaucrats are retaining their jobs with increasing difficulty, and a Communist-led strike at an important PDC publishing house threatens to bankrupt the company. As a result, PDC legislators are marshaling their forces to oppose some of Allende's economic proposals.

As these conflicts become stronger, the more extreme members of Allende's coalition are urging the President to take harsher measures against PDC interests. A leftist columnist who is a close friend of Allende has already begun hinting that PDC "rightists" are trying to sabotage the government's program.

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[GUINEA: The invading force that landed in Conakry yesterday seems to be a Portuguese-backed commando operation against the government of President Toure.

The intruding force, which Toure says consists of some 350 "European and African mercenaries," was ferried ashore early Sunday morning from at least four unmarked vessels clearly visible from the port of Conakry. The attackers captured two important military camps in the capital. Other main targets, both of which sustained heavy physical damage, were the President's suburban compound and the headquarters of the guerrilla movement that has been relatively successful in neighboring Portuguese Guinea. Toure has allowed the guerrillas to use Guinean territory as a rest and staging area and has also funneled Soviet arms to them.

No Guinean leaders appear to have been seized or injured by the invaders. The government retained control of the radio, which by last night was claiming that the intruders had been suppressed. Sporadic firing occurred during the night, however, and more fighting may be in the offing. Guinean leaders expect the ships that landed the strike force to return, either to pick up the men or to land more.

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Lisbon may have hoped the bold invasion would spark an internal uprising against Toure and bring to power a new government indebted to Portuguese aid. Failing that, the Portuguese may hope at least to frighten Toure into reducing his aid to the insurgents in Portuguese Guinea and to humiliate his regime by staging a successful commando operation. Publicly, Portuguese officials are denying any involvement in the affair.



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